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## **500 San José Teachers Helped Through City's Successful Homebuyer Program**

***San José gains reputation as "most teacher-friendly city in California"***

***San José*** --- Since Mayor Ron Gonzales launched the San José Teacher Homebuyer Program in 1999, the city has helped more than 500 teachers buy their first homes in the city where they teach in public schools.

At a City Hall celebration of this milestone today, the mayor congratulated Myra Rountree, a fourth-grade teacher from the LUCHA Elementary School in the Alum Rock School District, who is the 500<sup>th</sup> teacher to be aided by the San José Teacher Homebuyer Program.

"The number one factor in the education of a child is the relationship they have with their teachers. A good teacher who has roots in our community can make a real difference in helping our children achieve academic success," said Gonzales.

"Other cities in California and across the nation now look to San José as the model for successful and creative partnerships that increase community support and investments for quality education. On behalf of all our students, we're proud to be regarded as the most teacher-friendly city in the state."

The San José Teacher Homebuyer Program is part of the city's efforts to support better education in San José public schools by helping districts recruit and retain quality teachers. Through the program San José teachers can receive up to \$65,000 in zero-interest down payment assistance toward the purchase of their first home.

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Since the program was established in 1999, more than 500 San José teachers serving students in 166 local schools have received up to \$65,000 in zero-interest down payment assistance to help buy their first homes in San José.

“At first I was extremely discouraged with the current housing prices in the Valley, but through this great program I’m now proud to be a homeowner vested in the community where I teach,” said Rountree.

She applied for a \$60,000 loan through the Teacher Homebuyer Program to purchase a three-bedroom townhome near LUCHA Elementary School in East San José. She also was able to combine the city loan with assistance from the California Housing Finance Agency programs and other state loans.

Through the San José Housing Department, the city has provided nearly \$21 million in loan assistance, and works with public and private lending agencies, housing developers, and community and real estate organizations to help put more teachers in homes.

In addition to direct loan assistance, the city also uses loan and tax credit programs from other local, state, and federal agencies to leverage support for teachers. The city’s funding commitments since 1999 have leveraged over \$137 million in other private and public funds.

For more information about the San José Teacher Homebuyer Program, eligibility, and housing assistance, contact the San José Housing Department at (408) 975-4468, or go to:

***[www.sjhousing.org/program/thp.html](http://www.sjhousing.org/program/thp.html)***

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